

[Bethel-Harrisonburg.org](http://Bethel-Harrisonburg.org)

*The purpose of this congregation shall be to worship God in accordance with the faith of Judaism; to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage; to strengthen the ties within the Jewish community; to strengthen the bonds of loyalty with the Jewish people everywhere; to bring nearer the Dominion of God on earth through an emphasis on the principles of righteousness and harmony in society at large, and to engage in social action projects in pursuit of social justice and Tikkun Olam (repair of both the human and nonhuman components of the world).*

**MARCH 2018**

## ***A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT***

This month's edition of What's Happening at Beth El as seen from my perspective

As I write this, it is nearly 70 degrees outside and it emphasizes to me that we are expectantly approaching the warmth of Spring, Purim, and Pesach. It is a pleasure to share with you some of my perspectives on important happenings at Beth El. In the very recent past SHORTY had its ski weekend with nearly 2 dozen other Jewish teens from nearby communities and many of us were entertained by the fund-raising musical concert planned and managed so well by Mickey Glago.

Even more recently, namely last night, the Board of Directors met and dealt with the following matters, among others. There will be some sort of change to engaging our families with young children in a Shabbat celebration because the model we've been using has not worked well. (Thanks to Amanda Friss for taking some of the lead on this change.) Various fix ups to our physical surroundings are under consideration including improved lighting for the parking lot, replacement of the sculpture on the front of the building and training in the newly acquired and now-installed life-saving AED in our social hall (Thanks Leslie Ney for spearheading this.).

Also, thankfully Linda Kohn will continue as our connection to the PJ Library program and as our representative to the local Interfaith Association. Please contact her with suggestions and questions about these. The Board learned of the decision by Faith in Action to focus its attention on problems of the local criminal justice system (see a more complete description of this elsewhere in this *Bridge*). Finally, as some of you may already know, I have appointed a nominating committee (Bill Ney, chair with Michelle Ornstein and Dara Hall) to prepare a slate of Board member candidates to be voted on at our annual congregational meeting in May. Please be generous your time if you are contacted about joining the lay leadership of Beth El.

It is my sincere wish that all of us will thrive as our weather goes through the fits and starts of getting us to the next season. I repeat my request that you share with me any questions or concerns that you have about Beth El, either electronically ([aikconsult@comcast.net](mailto:aikconsult@comcast.net)) or by phone (540-746-3319) or by text message (same #) or in person.

*L'Shalom*

Andy

## ***FROM THE RABBI'S DESK***

Dear Beth El Congregants and Friends,

We have moved into our Spring holiday season. It began the end of January with Tu Be'Shevat, continued at the end of February with Purim, and now enters into Pessach at the end of March. Immediately after Pesach comes Yom HaSho'ah, Yom Hazikaron, and Yom Ha'atzma'ut, all during the period of the counting of the Omer, which continues into May. May this surfeit of holidays, celebrations, and commemorations bring you joy and good memories.

### **THINGS OF NOTE AND TO COME**

A follow up to a January note: the Sisterhood has acquired and installed an AED device (heart defibrillation device) in the social hall of the congregation. I pray heartily that no one will ever need it, but if the need arises it is there. It is not difficult to use; and it is constructed so that it cannot harm a healthy person (it won't operate). When you are in the building take a moment to note the location, and ask about the steps in using it. The more people know about it and how to operate it, the more likely it can be deployed when needed. This is a major step in the direction of *pikuach nefesh* – the saving of a soul. Kol Hakavod to the Women's group for leading on this, the Men's club for supporting it, and all those who donated towards it.

The Interfaith Brotherhood dinner on January 28<sup>th</sup> with Pastor Hay and Asbury United Methodist Church was a warm and lovely event, well attended, and very friendly. Pastor Hay and I arranged a brief program ahead of the meal, and from all I could hear the conversation flowed from there. It felt very much like a success. Kol Hakavod to Les Mintzer and the Men's club for putting it together, and continuing this long-standing tradition.

Shorty's ski weekend event was February 9-10. Despite questionable weather, a very respectable number of members from various youth groups showed up. Shorty planned and conducted the service, which was both fun and upbeat. I was so very proud to watch them as they effortlessly and smoothly led a celebration of Shabbat, taking on all the roles and covering all the bases. This speaks volumes not only about our youth group, but about the religious school which has prepared them to be capable of this. Yasher Koachem, Shorty!

I was unable to attend the Valentines Day Concert Evening at Beth El, but the word on the street was that it was fabulous. I hope it will become an annual event, and even more people will attend each year. Lots of people made it happen, but it appeared to me that the engine pulling the train was Mickey Glago – Kol Hakavod.

### **CALENDAR**

Scheduled Rabbi-led Religious services for the upcoming period are:

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Shabbat service at 7:30; Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat service at 7:30; and Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, Passover first night seder at Beth El at 6 pm.

## IN THE CONGREGATION

[Based on what I have been told and permitted to share. If you wish me to include a notice about someone here, please let me know; if they agree I will be glad to do so. Similarly, if you wish a name removed, please let me know.]

Refuah Shelemah/Mi Sheberach:

Chuck Slott, Marlene and Blaine Brumbaugh, Lynne Landsberg, Dennis Ward, Lenore Price, Dale Brothers, Estelle Robinson, Nicole Rotondi (Sherri Alt's daughter), Joyce Helbraun, Irma Nemoytin, Sam Dailey, Mary Handley, Shirley Gould, Joan Funston, and Elliot Golub.

Baruch Hashem:

Sam Dailey has been fitted with an artificial pancreas, and it appears to be functioning well! We pray for the best possible outcome.

Mazal Tov:

Dan Jenkins on his adoption of Leah!

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

*Karayt*

In the Torah and Talmud, there are certain actions that are seen as punishable. When we look at the various punishments they seem to come in a hierarchy. All of them are seen as offensive to G-d to some degree, so we are enjoined to make sacrifices or offerings to G-d as an expression of our remorse, regret, or wish to do better. This type of offering or sacrifice is discussed extensively in the book Vayikra (Leviticus).

Most of these actions require the process of Teshuvah or repentance, recognizing that we have made an error, taking steps to not repeat it, seeking forgiveness of the one(s) injured by our action, and seeking to set it right, before finally approaching G-d to ask for forgiveness.

Some of the time, those actions of repentance are not possible. For example, when our action has irredeemably destroyed something that can have no monetary value assigned, or that simply cannot be replaced, and there is no way to set it right. This is discussed in the context of reputation. When we have acted in a way that destroys someone's reputation, it is considered as irredeemable, because harmful words once said cannot be recalled or retrieved, so this action is seen as a form of murder – here, just as in murder, we cannot repair the damage. And if the person is sufficiently damaged, they may be in no position to offer forgiveness.

In actual murder, there is the additional aspect that we cannot ask for forgiveness – the only one who can forgive is no longer able to respond.

The Torah and Talmud have a series of punishments of varying weights levied. For most things, we are directed to the process of Teshuvah, followed by an offering to G-d, as described. For those things for which Teshuvah cannot be effective, the texts speak of four forms of capital punishment: death by stoning, decapitation, burning or strangulation. It is arguable how or if these penalties were levied, but this is what is seen as the legitimate punishment for crimes against other persons.

For punishment of transgressions directly against G-d, we read the story of Korach and his followers. When they offended G-d by challenging G-d's selection of Moses, they and their

families were swallowed by a pit that opened beneath their feet, and they went down to Sheol entirely – which implies that they died on the spot. This was harsh, but it is in line with the punishments we have mentioned.

On a completely other level, and only for specific crimes, there is one more severe (I would argue) class of punishment mentioned. It is to become ‘Karayt’. Literally, it means cutting off. What it refers to is that a person who violates a direct commandment and acts in a manner that is offensive to G-d will suffer this punishment, which consists not of death or torture, but of being severed from G-d and the Hebrews. The prime example of this is the one that fails to observe the commandments concerning leaven at Passover. That person is subject to this punishment. The punishment is that they have no connection to the community, to the Jewish people, or to G-d, and their future is ended. Their descendants will die out, they will have no connections or community, and no family. It is not that they will simply die which might be more merciful; they will be alone and lonely in a way that no human being should ever be.

Every year leading up to Passover I re-read this description, and I think about what a blessing my family, friends and community are, and how much these define who I am. Without these connections, I would feel adrift. If I had no community at all, I would be lost, alive, but without any meaning or purpose, my life would feel empty. I don’t think I would know what to do, or care about doing it.

When I think of this I can’t understand why anyone would cut themselves off from their community, or choose not to be part of it. Worse than the old saying ‘cut off your nose to spite your face’ – it is a closer to ‘kill your soul to punish someone else who isn’t even aware of it’. It is among the saddest sights I know or can imagine.

You may not believe the religious basis of this idea, but you have to see that conceptually it applies to all because it addresses basic human needs and behaviors.

All I can do in this regard when I see people in this category is to feel deeply saddened that these people have made this choice, which harms themselves and those around them, and pray for them to find wholeness. Then, it is my obligation to turn my attention to those who are in community and join with them as they celebrate, mourn, and live.

Chag HaAviv Sameach ve’Pesach Kasher [happy Spring holiday and a kosher Passover],

**Rabbi Joe Blair**

## **CONTACTING THE RABBI**

Rabbi Joe may be reached by email at [RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com](mailto:RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com). He reads email regularly, **except** on Jewish Holidays or Shabbat, when he does not use the computer at all.

His cell phone number is 925-272-8563 (925-2-RAVJOE). Please note this number. **PLEASE CALL** if you have any urgent messages or **in case of an emergency**.

Please let Rabbi Joe know if you or anyone you know is ill or would want a call or visit for any reason. You are also invited to contact Rabbi Joe to arrange an appointment to meet or speak. The rabbi will be happy to set a time to speak with you, so that he can offer you his full, undivided attention.

Telephone messages left at the Congregation number are not checked regularly. Please use the cell phone number noted – 925-272-8563.

*Leadership*

Rabbi: Joe Blair

President: Andy Kohen

Vice President: Ruth Berger

Treasurer: Peter Kohn

Secretary: Phil Renick

Corresponding Secretary: Cindy Baron

Trustee: Lester Mintzer

Trustee: Andy Kohen

Trustee: Ron Ornstein

Past President: Kim Gutterman

At large member: Amanda Friss

At large member: Gale Clemons

Sisterhood President: Sherri Alt + Rebekah Greenfield

Men's Club President: Lester Mintzer

Religious School Principals: Dara Hall + Liz Webb

**Bridge Editor**  
**Elliott Golub**  
[Elgolubret@comcast.net](mailto:Elgolubret@comcast.net)  
**540-289-5336**

# YAHREZEITS

01 Ivan Lantz			Bob Lantz' Father
Anne Mintzer	2010	Member	
02 Evan Poster	2009		Alan Poster's Son
03 Julias Wise	1954	Member	
Mary Frank Loewner	1945		
04 Joshua Rabinowitz			
05 Bertha Ney	1943	Member	
Lilly Schwartz		Member	
Shirley Dobin	1982		Gale Clemons Mother
Rosalie Hirsch	1988		
06 Joseph Berney		Member	
Hetty Marrick	1972		
07 Maurice Scheuer	1935	Member	
08 Sadie Derechensky			Max's Wife
09 Rae Slater	1950	Member	
10 Baruch Ney	1915		Member The Original B. Ney
Merwin Kalman			Brian Kalman's Father
Phyllis Rodbell			Herb Rodbell's Wife
12 Joe Kimmel	1974	Member	
14 Nathan Minskoff			Jerry Minskoff's Father
Anna Rodbell	1959		Herb Rodbell's Mother
Lenore White			Mike White's Mother
15 Jonathan Freudenthal			Judy Freudenthal's Brother
Mary Blatt	1994		Frank Blatt's Mother
16 Louis Amber	1903		
18 Rose Solomon	1903		
19 Joseph Huffman			Mildred Rubin's Father
Louise Perlman	1997		Milton Perlman's Wife
20 Augusta Loewner	1883	Member	
Rabbi Bernard Bloom			Rabbi at Beth El
21 Morton Nusbaum		Member	
Flossie Hollander	1888		Child
22 Sigmund Wise	1909	Member	
Esther Clayman	1981		Harry Clayman's Mother
Abraham Bersson			Bob Bersson's Father
23 William Friddle	1958	Member	
Michael Mintzer	1976		Anne Mintzer's Husband
Aaron Sissman			
Cornelia Oestreicher	1918	Member	
24 Esther Miller	1951	Member	
25 Charles Schwalb	1995		Steve Schwalb's Father
Lilly Schwartz	1983	Member	
26 Phillip Feig			Betty Nemoytin's Father
27 Beatrice Schwalb	1992		Steve Schwalb's Mother
29 Fanny Spivak			

Max Sissman  
31 Rabbi David Fazon  
Margot Stein  
George Goldberg

2005

Dave Frankel's Grandfather  
Gary Stein's Mother  
Dave Merlin's Friend

## ***DONATIONS***

### [To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund](#)

Dale Brothers in memory of Gloria Richter Simon (Her Mother).

Dale Brothers in memory of Karen Vanderhoof (Her Sister).

### [To the General Fund](#)

Dale Brothers in memory of Elaine Schreiber

Mike & Mo Goldberger in honor of Leah's adoption.

Penny Williams

Nancy Stewart to help with the Valentine's Day Music Festival.

### [To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund](#)

Dale Brothers In honor of Becka & Dan's Family Simcha



***Chag Purim Sameach!***

***Kitah Bet makes Purim masks***



***Kitah Alef makes iced Hebrew letters***



## SHORTY:

SHORTY had an awesome ski weekend in February! The service was wonderful, the activities and camaraderie amongst all our visitors was awesome, and the unseasonably warm and rainy weather didn't get our skiers down! All in all it was a fabulous weekend. Many thanks to so many members of the Men's club and the Sisterhood for providing delicious food throughout!

## ***SISTERHOOD***

In keeping with Sisterhood's Year of Health, we are proud to say we have purchased and hung in a case an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) in the Social Hall. There is a sign near the handicapped bathroom indicating where the AED is located. See attached picture. In an emergency with a person who has collapsed, is unconscious and not breathing, please CALL 911 first. Follow any instructions given by the dispatcher as you would for any call made to 911. You must first turn on the AED and it will give you clear instructions on how to use. There are also written cards attached with clear instructions. Please plan to attend the congregational meeting this year, we will have a testing AED just like the one we purchased, everyone can see it and hear its instructions. It is our fervent prayer this device will never have to be used but you can feel confident that if it is needed and used, it is safe and YOU might just save a life! Leslie Ney has graciously offered to check the AED often and replace batteries when needed. Phil Renick has offered to assist with questions, Leslie Ney has worked with the Rescue Squad for many, many years, has been an ER nurse for many, many years and continues to actively teach Advanced Life Support classes for certification. She worked with Emergency Services for the class that was provided for our congregation for "Hands On Only" and also to purchase the AED. Leslie is available for questions as she has worked so hard to make this happen, Leslie, I thank you so much for all of your efforts and sincerity and knowledge and experience and all you do for our Sisterhood.

Sisterhood would also like to thank : BethEl Men's Club, Elliott and Thea Golub, Mike and Maureen Goldberger, Cindy Baron, Joan Funston, Valerie Stephens and BethEl Sisterhood for your kind donations toward the purchase of our AED.

Our last meeting was a fantastic dinner and healthy skin care program presented by Sara Trantum, we had a great discussion of different skin types and awesome products that she works with to have healthy skin! Thank you Sara!

Our next meeting is on Monday 3/5/18 at 6 pm at the Temple. We will have dinner and for our year of health, we are honored to have our own Dr. Heidi Rafferty join us to talk about breast health. This is for

all of the women interested in our congregation. You do not have to be an active sisterhood member to join us, we would love for all of the women to take advantage of the programs we are presenting. Please RSVP to Margee Greenfield if you plan on attending so we can plan on dinner. There will be more information coming soon.

Any questions? Please call Sherri Alt or Rebekah Greenfield, Sisterhood Co-Presidents



Thank you to Ron Ornstein for helping mount the AED!

### **Attention All Members.**

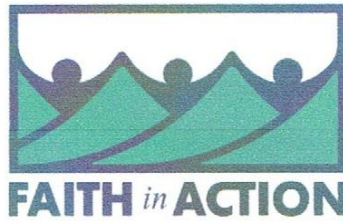
Congregational Board Elections will be in May.

There will be several openings for new people to get involved with Beth El Leadership. Please contact one of us if you can help with this important endeavor,

Michelle Ornstein

Dara Hall

Bill Ney



## FAITH IN ACTION STATEMENT OF ISSUE FOR 2018

*We have a dream* of having our local jail become a model "greenhouse" for the rehabilitation and treatment of individuals awaiting their trial or completing their sentences. We believe jail budgets and programs should reflect such priorities and that families of inmates not be burdened with costs associated with the care of their loved ones.

*We have a dream* of reducing incarceration in our community by utilizing evidence-based alternative sanctions for low-risk offenders. We believe costly extended jail stays actually increase recidivism and reduce public safety as inmates lose positive connections to jobs and family while being exposed to a criminal environment that encourages anti-social behavior.

*We have a dream* of seeing our criminal justice system trend toward restorative rather than punitive responses to offenders. We believe the needs of victims should be a first priority, and that those causing others harm should be directly involved in repairing those harms and making appropriate restitution.

**Therefore, we are committed to work with relevant policy makers and stakeholders to achieve the following in 2018**

- 1. Eliminate the financial burden of the \$1 per day fee currently paid by family members of inmates at our local jail and the \$3 charged for local inmates transferred to Middle River Regional Jail** (as permitted, but not mandated, by VA Code Section 53.1-131.3). This is one of numerous high priority concerns expressed by family members of inmates that needs to be addressed.
- 2. Engage in a careful and open selection process for the hiring of a well qualified Community Justice Planner.** This person would evaluate all criminal justice programs and practices, make strategic recommendations for the best allocation of resources, and coordinate the legally mandated biennial update to the Community Criminal Justice Board's Community Corrections Plan (as stated in VA Code Section 9.1-175).
- 3. Establish protocols for all juvenile justice cases to be screened for a restorative justice process** (see VA Code Section 16.1-278-.8). We will support transparent and community based steps in implementing restorative justice alternatives for adults and juveniles alike.

MARCH 2018

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	1	2	3
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL (22). Gutterman Snack			Erev Purim		7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL - Purim (23)	6pm Sisterhood Meeting				6:30pmFAMILY SHABBAT (child service)	
					7:30pmRABBI SERVICE	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Daylight Saving Time starts					7:30pmSHORTY LAY SERVICE	
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL (24)						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL (25)	7pmBoard Meeting				7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
12:30pmSHORTY MEETING						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	Yom HaAliyah				BETH EL PASSOVER SEDER (first night)	Pesach I (First day of Passover)
					Erev Pesach	